



# Arizona Girls State Conference

## University of Arizona

Governor Jan Brewer  
Wednesday, June 9, 2010

Good afternoon!

It is wonderful to see you all here, eager and enthusiastic participants in a program that mirrors the real-life functions of government.

Public service is a high calling, one that requires the honesty of a Truth-Teller, the fortitude of a Problem Solver ... and skin as thick as an Abrams Battle Tank.

Also beneficial, as I am sure you will all agree, is ... dare I say it? ... the clear thinking and common sense of a WOMAN.

You probably know that following his visit to America, in the 1830s, the French aristocrat De Tocqueville wrote a book called "*Democracy in America*," in which he tried to explain America to his fellow Frenchmen and Europeans, – and he wrote:

*"If I am asked how we should account for the unusual prosperity and growing strength of this nation, I would reply that they must be attributed to the SUPERIORITY OF THEIR WOMEN."*

I could not agree more.

Further, he wrote, "*Americans constantly display their complete confidence in the understanding of their wives and have a deep respect for their freedom. They esteem that her mind is as capable as a man's of discovering the plain truth and that her heart is just as resolute in following it. ... In America a girl can set out on a long journey alone and without fear.*"

And, that's true.

My long journey into public service began without fear, because my parents had established a firm foundation for me, one which was cemented in love for this country.

I was born in Hollywood, California in 1944.

My family was living on a Navy Base in Hawthorne, Nevada – the largest ammunition Navy base in the world, but my mother didn't want her child born there, so she moved to California to live with her sister, and moved back to Nevada, where I lived until I was ten.

My father had severe health problems -- from working in the ammunition depot -- so we moved back to California. His condition got much worse -- and he died when I was 11.

The challenges my mother, my brother, and I were about to face were daunting.

For an 11-year-old, they were terrifying.

But, my mother taught me how to deal with those challenges – she met them head-on. She opened a dress shop and she went to work, 10 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I worked right beside her, every day after school and on weekends.

My mother didn't complain about counting every penny or being a widow with two children.

When life got hard, she worked harder.

She never quit.

Let me tell you something: My mother, Edna Drinkwine, died at the age of 87 – and she was my inspiration -- each and every day.

From her, I learned to make hard choices.

She taught me the value of action -- that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

She taught me to honor our country.

She taught me that the only thing you're entitled to in life is a chance.

And, she taught me that you're measured by how you meet challenges.

She was right, of course.

I got a degree from Valley College in radiological technology, and, as a licensed certified radiological technician, went to work in the LA County hospital.

From there, I had many different jobs, including office administrator, a salesperson at a Kinney Shoe store, a Jewelry store, and , believe it or not, as a private investigator.

I was married by that time, with my husband in college, so being a private investigator was something I could do on my own time – not only the investigative footwork, but also writing up the reports late at night so they could be ready for court the next day.

But, I will tell you, we could not wait to get out of California.

Finally, we packed up a U-Haul trailer, and we moved to Arizona in 1970. My husband opened a practice as a chiropractor, and we have lived happily here ever since.

I ran for the Legislature as a state Representative and served there from 1983 to 1986, and then as state senator from 1987 to 1996.

As Senator, I held the leadership position of Majority Whip from 1993 to 1996, and helped to win passage of tax relief and budget reform; truth in sentencing; open enrollment, school report cards, and charter schools; clean air and water legislation and state trust land preservation.

I and my colleagues in legislative leadership routinely conducted the state's business in 100-day legislative sessions, sending members home to their districts by mid-April with a balanced state budget and a body of work to show for their time at the Capitol.

Oh, for the good old days.

When I began as Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, I encountered a local government bogged down so deeply in debt that it had utilized one hundred and sixty five million dollars in short-term borrowing -- just to meet cash flow.

At the end of my tenure in 2002, I left Maricopa County in one of the strongest financial positions of any county in the nation.

In 2002, I was elected Secretary of State, and -- re-elected in 2006 -- and always tried to find ways to save taxpayer money and make the election process more accessible for the disabled, overseas military personnel and the general public.

Following Gov. Janet Napolitano's resignation, I took the oath of office on January 21, 2009, to become Arizona's 22<sup>nd</sup> Governor.

I have been proud to serve as your Governor every day since that time.

In closing, let me share with you a favorite story of mine.

There was a minor traffic accident.

A crowd had gathered, and there was slightly injured individual sitting in the street.

A woman walked up to the man to help him, but another man rushed up, shoved her aside, and said, "Here, let me at him. I've studied First Aid."

Well, the woman stepped back, and watched as the man fumbled and bumbled his way with his First Aid knowledge. Finally, at one point, she tapped him on the shoulder and said, "When you come to that part about calling the doctor ... I'm right here."

Well, as I look at all of you, I can see that you are "RIGHT HERE" preparing to be called into service, that you are ready, and that you will never, ever be pushed aside.

Thank you for allowing me to spend some time with you this afternoon.

God bless you and your families, God bless your FEARLESS paths into public service, and God bless Arizona.

Thank you.